

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 /060 W

-----065936 110435Z /64

O 110300Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2783

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 3940

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, RP

SUBJ: AQUINO INTERVIEWED ON MANILA TELEVISION

REF: MANILA 3618

1. SUMMARY: IN A 90-MINUTE TELEVISED INTERVIEW MARCH 10, OPPOSITION LEADER BENIGNO AQUINO WAS ALLOWED TO REPLY TO MOST OF THE CHARGES RAISED BY SECDEF ENRILE ON THE SAME PROGRAM LAST WEEK (REFTEL) AND TO GET IN A FEW LICKS OF HIS OWN. AQUINO MAINTAINED HE HAD "WORKED WITH -- NOT FOR -- THE CIA" AS A PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT. HE DENIED EVER BEING A COMMUNIST OR MEMBER OF A FRONT ORGANIZATION, SAYING HE WROTE THE LETTERS ENRILE HAD QUOTED AGAINST HIM IN A MILITARY-APPROVED EFFORT TO LEARN THE FACTS OF ENRILE'S ASSERTION THAT MARTIAL LAW WAS TRULY POPULAR. HE AGREED THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS IS MOVING TOWARD POLITICAL NORMALIZATION AND SAID THE INTERIM LEGISLATURE ELECTIONS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE OPPOSITION TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS WHETHER OR NOT IT WINS MANY SEATS. HE CONTRADICTED ENRILE'S ASSERTIONS ON HIS CRIMINAL CHARGES, BUT HE SAID THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS IMPROVED ENOUGH TO PERSUADE HIM TO SUBMIT TO SUPREME COURT DECISION ON JURISDICTION FOR HIS CASE. AQUINO'S INTERVIEWERS WERE CLEARLY OUTCLASSED AND FOUND FEW IF ANY WEAK SPOTS IN HIS VERSION OF EVENTS. THE VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE WAS A CREDIT TO AQUINO, BUT THE

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FACT THAT THE SHOW TOOK PLACE AT ALL IS A CREDIT TO MARCOS. END SUMMARY.

2. DETAINED EX-SENATOR BENIGNO AQUINO WAS INTERVIEWED ON THE LOCAL TELEVISION SHOW "FACE THE NATION" MARCH 10. BY AGREEMENT, HE HAD THE SAME INTERVIEWERS AS DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE MARCH 5 (REFTEL). THE SHOW WAS TAPED

AT FORT BONIFACIO, WHERE AQUINO IS DETAINED, THAT MORNING, AND AQUINO APPROVED THE TAPE BEFORE IT WAS BROADCAST. AQUINO AND HIS SISTER, TV DIRECTOR LUPITA CONCIO, HAD WANTED THE SHOW TO BE BROADCAST LIVE TO GUARD AGAINST SUBSTANTIVE EDITING. HOWEVER, GOP'S NATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTIN CENTER INSISTED IT BE TAPED, CLAIMING SECURITY AND ELECTRONIC GEAR ON THE BASE RAISED PROBABILITY OF EMBARRASSING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. NMPC SAID SHOW WAS BROADCAST UNCUT.

3. CIA CONNECT. AQUINO INSISTED HE HAD ACTED AS A GOP LIAISON WITH THE CIA AT THE REQUEST OF THREE PRESIDENTS. THE GOP AND USG, AS ALLIES, ROUTINELY SHARE INTELLIGENCE, HE SAID, AND HE RECEIVED MORE INFORMATION FROM THE CIA THAN HE GAVE. HE ADMITTED PROVIDING INFORMATION TO CIA ON HUK THREATS TO US INSTALLATIONS AT CLARK FIELD AND SAN MIGUEL COMMO SITE, BUT ONLY WITH PRESIDENTIAL PERMISSION. HE SAID HE ATTENDED A SERIES OF CIA-SPONSORED SEMINARS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AS A GOP REPRESENTATIVE IN THE MID-1950'S. BUT HE LIKENED IT TO ATTENDING WEST POINT AND SAID HE DID NOT RECEIVE SPY TRAINING.

4. IN THE "INDONESIAN AFFAIR," HE SAID PRESIDENT GARCIA SENT HIM TO ENSURE THAT US AND OTHERS USING CLARK FIELD TO INTERVENE IN THE 1958 "COLONELS' REVOLT" USED THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PHILIPPINE AIRBASE IN THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO ONLY FOR SUPPLY AND EVACUATION, NOT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.

5. ON HIS CONTACT WITH THE CIA IN ALGIERS, HE SAID US AMBASSADOR BLAIR IN MANILA HAD SUGGESTED HE CONTACT THE CIA STATION CHIEF IN ALGIERS TO BRIEF HIM, AS HEAD OF PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE, ON AFRICAN ATTITUDES. THIS WAS ALSO DONE AT PRESIDENTIAL REQUEST, HE SAID.

6. ON THE KATTENBERG-PAUKER REPORT, HE SAID THEY MET WITH HIS WIFE AND NOT WITH HIM PERSONALLY. HE DENIED THEY WERE CIA EMPLOYEES. HE SAID HE SAW NOTHING WRONG WITH EXCHANGING INFORMATION WITH THE CIA, BUT HE AGREED THAT IT WAS WRONG FOR A NON-AMERICAN TO PROVIDE SECRETS FOR PAY. HE DEFENDED US "MEDDLING" AS NECESSARY FOR A GREAT POWER.

7. HE VOLUNTEERED CRITICISM OF MARCOS' CONTRACT WITH US PUBLIC RELATIONS FRIM DOREMUS. HE SAID DOREMUS HAS KNOWN CIA CONNECTIONS, YET THE GOP CENTRAL BANK IS OBLIGED TO PROVIDE SECRET DATA FOR ITS USE WHILE PAYING

DOREMUS \$2 MILLION.

8. COMMUNIST CONNECTION. AQUINO STATED FIRMLY THAT "I WROTE THOSE LETTERS" WHICH ENRILE HAD READ, BUT HE DENIED HE HAD TRIED TO "SMUGGLE THEM OUT." ENRILE, HE SAID, HAD TOLD HIM IN 1974 THE PEOPLE LIKE MARTIAL LAW AND HE SHOULD STOP OPPOSING IT. IN AN EFFORT TO FIND OUT FOR HIMSELF, HE SOUGHT AND GOT PERMISSION TO TAKE HIS OWN SURVEY BY WRITING LETTERS TO PEOPLE HE TRUSTED, BUT THEY WERE NEVER DELIVERED. HE INSISTED HE DID NOT KNOW COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS PERSONALLY, BUT HE AND HIS FRIENDS KNEW PEOPLE WHO DID. HE INSISTED HE NEVER MET COMMANDER DANTE (BERNABE BUSCAYNO) OR VICTOR CORPUS, AND HE HAD MET PARTY CHIRMAN JOSE MARIA SISON ONLY  
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ONCE, "IN 1968, BEFORE HE TOOK TO THE HILLS."

9. AQUINO ADDED THAT, AS A PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT, HE HAD A COUNTRYWIDE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK. HE HAD MANY CONTACTS IN MINDANAO; USMAN SALI, KILLER OF GENERAL BAUTISTA LAST OCTOBER, WAS A "COMPADRE," HE SAID. HE HAD OFFERED TO USE HIS NETWORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, BUT NEVER GOT A REPLY. THE SOLUTION TO THE MINDANAO CRISIS, HE OFFERED, IS TO SEAL OUT FOREIGN SUPPLIES AND THEN OFFER ATTRACTIVE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS TO MUSLIMS.

10. AQUINO ADVOCATED LEGALIZING THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS HAD BEEN DONE IN EUROPE, PROVIDED THE PARTY DISOWNED VIOLENT REVOLUTION. HE SAID THE GOP SHOULD BE WILLING TODISCUSS ALL ALTERNATIVES WITH ALL OPPOSITION.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2784

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11. ELECTIONS. HE TOOK TWO OCCASIONS TO GIVE "COMMERCIALS" ON HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA (IBP). HE SAID HE ORGIINALLY URGED THE LIBERAL PARTY BOYCOTT BECAUSE OF BLOC VOTING. ON THAT BASIS LP LEADERS ROXAS AND SALONGA HAD WITHDRAWN THE LP. BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND DECIDED TORUN IN HOPES OF BEING RELEASED FROM DETENTION. HE FEELS "GETTING A FAIR SHAKE IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE. MARCOS OWNS THE BALLPARK AND OWNS THE REFEREES." THE FACT THE OPPOSITION CAN SPEAK IS IMPORTANT; IBP SEATS ARE SECONDARY. "EVEN IF WE WIN ALL 21 METRO MANILA SEATS, WHAT CAN WE DO IN A BODY OF 200?" STILL, IF HIS LABAN GROUP WINS IN MANILA, "THE VICTORY WILL REVERBERATE ALL OVER THE WORLD." HE CHOSE TO RUN IN MANILA, HE SAID, TO "SUBMERGE" HIS PERSONAL APPEAL IN CENTRAL OUZON AND SHOW THE STRENGTH OF OPPOSITIN SENTIMENT IN GENERAL.

12. AQUINO AGREED THAT MARCOS IS MOVING TOWARD NORMALIZATION: "AT LEAST THERE WILL BE HALF A PARLIAMENT," AND MARCOS HAS ALLOWED THE OPPOSITION TO SPEAK OUT FOR 45 DAYS. HE SAID HIS PERSONAL GOALS IN THE IBP ARE TO LIMIT ITS TERM IN ORDER TO HASTEN FULL NORMALCY, AND TO ESTABLISH A "BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE" TO PROBE ANOMALIES AT THE TOP. HE CITED THE WESTINGHOUSE-DISINI SCANDAL AND THE FACT THAT "24 FAMILIES CLOSE TO MALACANANG" HAVE

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SIX BILLION PESOS IN GOVERNMENT-APPROVED LOANS AS EXAMPLES OF WHAT HE WANTED INVESTIGATED.

13. CRIMINAL CHARGES. AQUINO STRONGLY DISPUTED ENRILE'S VERSION OF THE MURDER EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM. HE CLAIMED ENRILE'S LAW FIRM HAD BEEN HIS LAWYER WHEN HE ACQUIRED HIS HACIENDA IN TARLAC, YET HE BADLY MISSTATED THE FACTS. HE TREATENED TO SUE ENRILE UNLESS HE APOLOGIZED. HE ALSO READ THREE CONFLICTING VERSIONS OF TESTIMONY AGAINST HIM BY THE ONLY GOVERNMENT WITNESS ON THE MURDER CHARGE, NPA COMMANDER "MELODY".

14. ASKED ABOUT HIS APPEALS TO THE SUPREME COURT, AQUINO SAID THAT RECENT STATEMENTS BY CHIEF JUSTICE CASTRO, AND REPORTS FROM HIS MOTHER THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS IMPORVED, PERSUADED HIM THERE HAD BEEN "TREMENDOUS CHANGES" IN THE COURT'S INDEPENDENCE. THUS HE WAS NOW

WILLING TO ACCEPT SUPREME COURT'S DECISION ON MILITARY  
VS. CIVILIAN JURISDICTION HIS CASE.

15. AQUINO CLOSED THE PROGRAM WITH AN APPEAL TO  
MARCOS TO ALLOW HIM ACCESS TO FOREIGN AND LOCAL MEDIA  
DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

16. PRESS TREATMENT. MANILA NEWSPAPERS MARCH 10  
REPORTED DETAILS OF AARRANGEMENTS FOR BROADCAST OF THE  
INTERVIEW, AND ALL PAPERS MARCH 11 FRONT-PAGE REPORTS  
OF THE BROADCAST. THESE STORIES WERE PRINTED SIDE-BY-  
SIDE, HOWEVER, WITH FULL TEXT OF AN INSTANT REBUTTAL  
LETTER BY ENRILE WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPTTEL.

17. COMMENT: AQUINO WAS OBVIOUSLY IN FULL CONTROL  
THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. HIS QUESTIONERS WERE UNABLE  
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TO FLUSTER HIM OR CATCH HIM IN CONTRADICTIONS, AND HE  
MAINTAINED EQUANIMITY EXCEPT WHEN DENOUNCING ENRILE FOR  
DISTORTING FACTS ABOUT HIS CRIMINAL CHARGES. HE HAD QUICK,  
USING A RAPID-FIRE DELIVERY IN A MIX OF ENGLISH AND TAGALOG,  
PLAUSIBLE, ALMOST PAT ANSWERS FOR ALL QUESTIONS, AND THE  
INTERVIEWERS WERE VISIBLY GLUM BY THE END OF THE SHOW.  
IT WAS, IN SHORT, A VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE WHICH PROBABLY  
WON AQUINO A NUMBER OF VOTES AMONG THOSE WITH ACCESS TO  
TELEVISION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT THE SHOW  
WAS BROADCAST AT ALL WILL REDOUND TO THE CREDIT OF MARCOS.  
BY ALLOWING AQUINO EVEN THIS BRIEF PUBLIC EXPOSURE, HE  
SHEDS SOME OF HIS IMAGE AS A DICTATOR WHO  
BROOKS NO OPPOSITION.  
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## Message Attributes

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